

News from the FPPC



California Fair Political Practices Commission
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Commission Advises Disclosure Requirements Apply to Internet Websites

The Commission has issued formal advice applying disclosure requirements to Internet websites that constitute independent expenditures paid for by a primarily formed or general purpose committee supporting or opposing a candidate for office.

In issuing its latest advice, the Commission ensures that when a committee or candidate engages in campaigning over the Internet, it cannot do so anonymously. It ensures that the public knows who is paying for independent expenditures regardless of the form that communication takes—whether it is printed, broadcast on television, radio, or disseminated over the Internet.

The advice follows the findings of the August 2010 report by the FPPC Subcommittee on Internet Political Activity chaired by Commissioners Elizabeth Garrett and Timothy A. Hodson, which led to numerous amendments to Commission regulations relating to electronic media advertisements. In amending its advertising disclosure regulations last year, the Commission made it clear that ads that appear on Internet web pages, blogs, mobile devices and the like must identify funding sources or identify that the ad was prepared independently of a candidate.

In its most recent advice, the Commission clarified that it did not intend to exempt Internet websites from these new disclosure rules. For instance, the new disclosure rules would apply equally to political button ads on Internet web pages, as well as Internet websites paid for by independent expenditures.

The *Rios* Advice Letter, No. A-11-181, may be accessed through the “What’s New” section on the Commission’s website, www.fppc.ca.gov.

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